

Zapruders get \$16M for JFK film

By Tom Squitieri
USA TODAY

WASHINGTON — The federal government will pay \$16 million for the original 26.3-second color film of President Kennedy's 1963 assassination after an arbitration panel ruled Tuesday that it is "a unique historical item of unprecedented worth."

The panel's 2-1 decision is binding on the government and the family of the late Abraham Zapruder, who made the film.

The settlement ends a sometimes contentious skirmish that pitted historic and emotional memories of Kennedy's assassination against the cold reality of today's skyrocketing auction

values of historical objects.

"The only issue was how much," said Leslie Batchelor, one of the Justice Department lawyers involved in the negotiations over how much the family should receive under a 1992 law making assassination-related material public property.

The amount, halfway between the government's offer of \$1 million and the family's demand for \$30 million, is millions higher than the purchase price for other historical items.

Henry Zapruder, Abraham Zapruder's son, said accusations that the family is greedy are "a bum rap."

"We ended up owning that (private) property. Our Constitution provides for just com-

pensation for the government action in taking something, and that's what we're doing; that's what we're getting," Zapruder, 61, said in an interview.

The family retains the copyright on the film but is taking steps to transfer the ownership to a public institution. Family members already have collected \$879,000 in royalties.

The panel delayed release of its decision so it would not occur immediately after the death of John F. Kennedy Jr.

The film will remain at the National Archives, where it has been stored since 1978 in a special film-preservation room chilled to 25 degrees.

► Film's history, 5A

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